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The President's Daily Brief

November 15, 1976

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SAUDI ARABIA: *King Khalid gave a rare and exclusive interview to Arnaud de Borchgrave of Newsweek last Wednesday which Foreign Minister Prince Saud later told the journalist was intended as a signal to the US president-elect that Riyadh wishes to pursue a close, cooperative relationship with Washington. The King adhered to standard Saudi foreign policy positions in the course of the interview.*

The foreign minister said that his government would like to work closely with the US in finding a Middle East settlement and was thinking in terms of a long-term petroleum agreement and price freeze in return for a Middle East deal. Prince Saud did not expand his remarks, but undoubtedly was aware that de Borchgrave would pass them on to US officials.

According to the Saudi-approved transcript of the interview, the King took the line that "peaceful coexistence" between the Arabs and Israel is possible if:

--Israel withdraws from the occupied Arab territories.

--The legitimate rights of the Palestinian people are recognized.

--The Palestinians are accorded self-determination.

In a transparent plea for US pressure on Israel, the King said he feared Tel Aviv would remain "arrogant" as long as it enjoys the support of "major powers."

On oil prices, Khalid argued that if the price level concerned Saudi Arabia alone, Riyadh would opt for a price freeze until the end of 1977. The King added, however, that the Saudi commitment and obligations to OPEC "may preclude such a freeze."

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Rhodesia

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RHODESIA: *Rhodesian security forces in late October employed tactics against nationalist guerrillas based in neighboring countries similar to tactics used before Prime Minister Smith's acceptance in September of the principle of majority rule within two years.*

The attacks late last month on guerrilla bases in Mozambique--where most guerrillas are located--were the first significant cross-border operations since August.

In addition, Zambian officials have complained privately that Rhodesia is building up its border forces, and some officials allege that Rhodesian troops briefly entered Zambia early this month. At about the same time, Rhodesian troops apparently made a minor incursion into Botswana.

The Rhodesian government probably believed the recent cross-border raids, in addition to achieving tactical military advantages, would boost the morale of both the security forces and the white population.

Although most Rhodesian whites accepted with apparent equanimity Smith's announcement on majority rule within two years, there were still signs of nervousness, and many whites were clearly thinking of leaving the country if conditions should deteriorate. A few signs of indiscipline appeared in the armed forces, and among some troops there was a growing reluctance to fight.

Smith probably also believed the Rhodesian military operations would not threaten the talks in Geneva and might help split the militant nationalists, who represent the Mozambique-based guerrillas, from the nationalist political groups headed by Joshua Nkomo and Bishop Muzorewa, which have little guerrilla support.

Members of the white delegation have said they see no prospect of reaching a settlement with the militants, and that they hope these delegates will walk out of the conference. The Smith government has maintained contacts with both Nkomo and Muzorewa, and apparently believes it may achieve an agreement with them that will safeguard white interests if the militants quit the Geneva talks.

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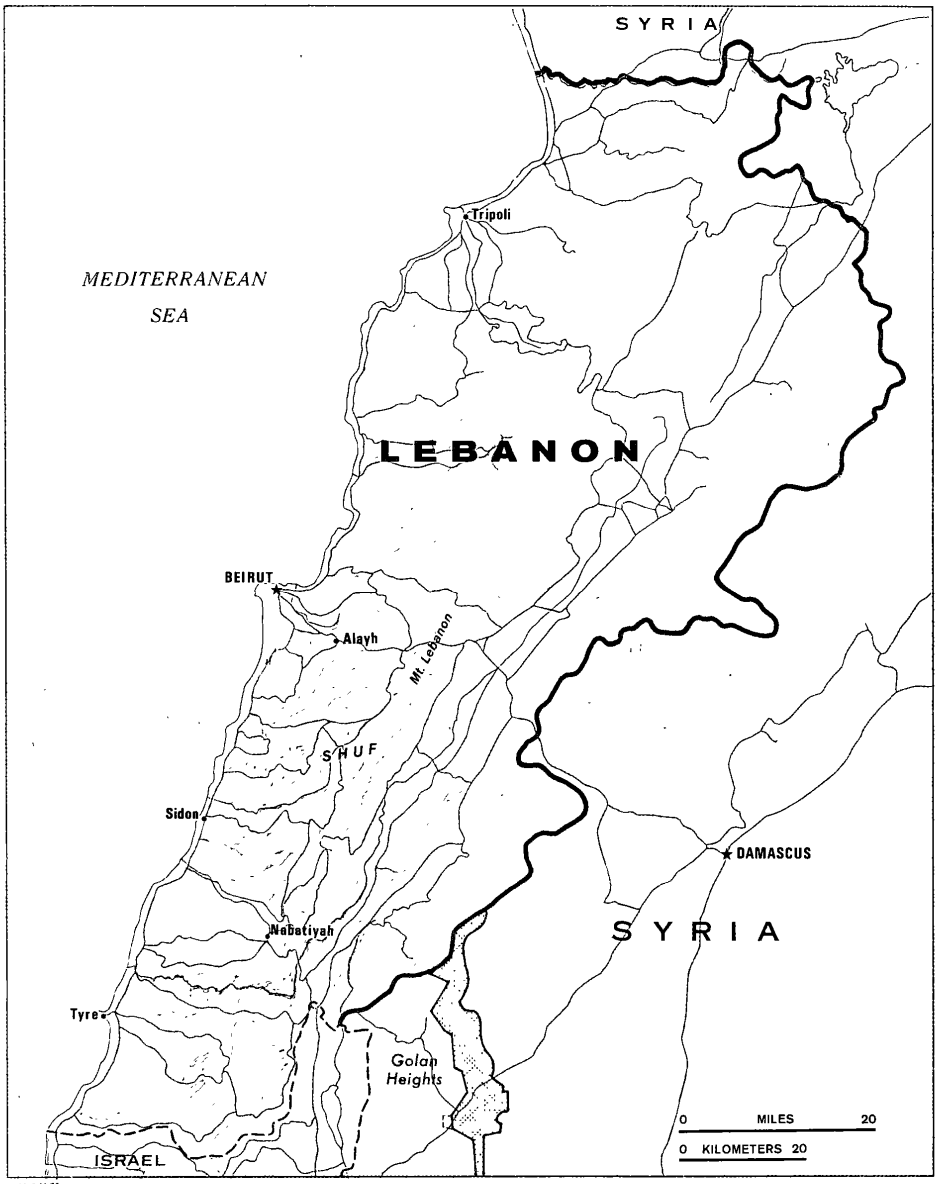

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In any event, Smith probably sees little chance of an early settlement that would persuade the guerrillas to lay down their arms. Under these circumstances, the government presumably believes the security forces must hit the guerrillas outside the country's borders or face heavier fighting within Rhodesia.

* * *

LEBANON: *About 6,000 Syrian peacekeeping troops and some 400 Soviet-built Syrian tanks entered Beirut at dawn today, according to press reports. The Syrian air force was also reportedly put on alert.*

Machine-gun and artillery fire, which had been evident in the capital throughout the night, continued as the Syrian forces entered the city, but apparently was not directed at them.

The entry of Syrian peacekeeping forces into Beirut had been held up again yesterday, apparently to give Lebanese President Sarkis more time to work out arrangements with all sides for a peaceful occupation of the city.

Sarkis and the Syrians on Saturday persuaded the Iraqis to agree to withdraw their forces from Beirut. Some 800 Iraqis are said to have already left west Beirut for the Shuf region. Their withdrawal will be a blow to the Lebanese leftist and Palestinian radical forces still in the city; they had sought to delay the Syrian advance by demanding security guarantees and objecting to the absence of other Arab League units from the peacekeeping forces in the Beirut area.

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The Syrians may have taken advantage of the delays to send reinforcements to Lebanon. According to press reports, two brigades with armor have encircled Beirut, in addition to the troops and armor that have entered the city, and another brigade is said to be heading for the Shuf--the stronghold of leftist leader Kamal Jumblatt, whose forces have been stockpiling their weapons in the area to avoid confiscation. 25X1

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one of the Syrians' stated objectives for months has been to disarm the Palestinians and all of the private militias in Lebanon. 25X1

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